

Health Council's CEO Fired not "Separated" – A Husband's Outrage

I have written this in the capacity of Tawanna Wedderburn's husband. The intent is to protect my family; embolden anyone similarly suffering silently; galvanize public attention to this very important matter; compel curiosity about the truth behind it; and to have culprits in any wrongdoing ultimately held to account.

Tawanna was mercilessly fired as the CEO of the Bermuda Health Council on December 7, 2018 leading to the Christmas holidays. The timing was clearly of strategic significance judging from the severe pressure to which she was subjected to settle the matter before the season ended. The reason given to her for her firing amounts to: 'Our future plans require new leadership so here's the 26 weeks maximum settlement you'd get at the Employment Tribunal. Take it before we change our minds. You have one week to decide and a few minutes to clear your things from the office.' With that her almost 12 years' service to the Council ended. No prior warning was provided before she arrived at work that morning and was mysteriously telephoned to meet at a restaurant. Upon arrival she was given this news verbally then handed a sheet of paper with two different press release scenarios, one claiming she "amicably separated", the other that she "resigned". Her refusal to choose one resulted in the downplayed deception published locally online that same Friday afternoon.

I invite readers to go to the www.Bermudalaws.bm website and access the *Bermuda Health Council Act 2004* to see for themselves how unlikely what I am describing should be. You may also want to go to the Council's www.bhec.bm website to see its internal governance documents.

We are middle-aged parents of a working class family with three children in university overseas. We rely upon our combined employment incomes to meet our day-to-day living expenses and to educate our children. By reliable accounts Tawanna was passionate about her work, extremely competent, honest and respected. The Council provides a vital function for which the CEO's role is indispensable. It has since been filled temporarily by a staff guest worker in an acting capacity. In addition to the predictable shock of what I am disclosing, we also carry the burden of affording legal representation to challenge this injustice.

Despite explicit threat of imprisonment for speaking to even our children on the matter, we contacted them the same day on the heels of social media to console them and to avoid derailing their writing final exams. We also put our best foot forward during their return home for the holidays suppressing the anxiety we are feeling about their future and bracing them for what's ahead. Of necessity our family home is being placed on the market for sale.

I can report to those behind this that your sneak attack is devastating. As you can see we remain isolated. No one has yet come publically to Tawanna's defense. I say it ironically and truthfully that her attackers are demonstrably powerful, presumably from years of bullying, intimidating and covertly ruining lives of those like herself. Our family is not the same. She's severely wounded, professionally blighted as a fired employee and demoralized. So far they're on point about the consequences of taking a stance. Her career prospects are severely limited especially with this matter unresolved. People close to us warn against taking our security for granted as this demonstration of power has ominous undertones of what else may be done to us. They speculate about the enormous amount of money in healthcare (over \$720 million dollars and mounting), inclined to make people go even further to protect their interests. This desperate likely self-wounding offensive is the best defense I can muster so far.

I apologize to Tawanna and our children if this single-handed decision to rant and to publicize my outrage in any way undermines her usual professional approach for redress. I appreciate that it also betrays my desperate attempt to undo the emasculation of helplessly seeing her violated, her hard work wasted and

denied to those desperately in need of it, and our children's future jeopardized. I know she will handle this as courageously and appropriately as she always does.

Those behind this have been so preoccupied and paranoid about using the law to avoid the answers, that they've forgotten about the questions:- What happened to the legal protections that were supposed to prevent the CEO from being ambushed and viciously bludgeoned in this manner? How can someone's extensive career in such a vital capacity be so brazenly ended seemingly without regard for public scrutiny or even a warning to her, let alone giving reasons? Who plotted and led the charge on the night of the long knives and who appointed and/or instructed them? Were there similarly devious punishments inflicted upon her before this cowardly attack? What else is afoot that is as dubious as the methods used to fire her? In Tawanna's stead, who will be selected to defend the interests of Bermudians who desperately need healthcare and cannot afford it? Why the rush to get rid of her now? Why now? Why now? And is this in any way related to damning things not yet publically known? I could be more exacting but I relent. I'll leave it to Tawanna to confront you with the answers.

In the meantime, this is wrong! Sickeningly wrong! It is a reckless abuse of power at the very least. I am incensed at the damage to Tawanna, the family resources and energy it is consuming and the stressful toll it is taking on us all. It will not go unchallenged. The people behind this will be defeated because they are missing a primary ingredient. They've picked the wrong victims. What we fear most is to leave your kind unchallenged to recklessly continue to wreak havoc with unacceptable consequences for us all. Gangland style, arrogant, intimidating tactics will not undermine our resolve. Limited resources will not prevent access to the courts. A judge will have the final say with the benefit of everyone's spilled guts. The veil of secrecy is being removed as I write and it will be ripped to shreds until justice prevails. You sought to isolate us but you're the ones "separated" from the countless lives that brought you into this world, and made it possible for you to climb onto that perch from which you're stooping to defecate on the rest of us. The writing is no longer on the wall. It's transmitted by Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp and it will say your names. And this proverbial slingshot prepared for Goliath has GPS laser guided accuracy.

Submitted by: Livingston Wedderburn

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